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## CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

Office of the City Manager

Letter to Commission No. 309-2004



To: Mayor David Dermer and  
Members of the City Commission

Date: December 10, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez  
City Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge", written over the printed name of the City Manager.

Subject: **WEEKLY UPDATE**

The purpose of this LTC is to provide you with an update describing some of the areas the Administration has recently been focusing on:

**Miami Beach Community Survey** – Staff has been working with representatives from the City's contractor, the Hay Group, on the community survey that will solicit feedback on how to make Miami Beach an even better place to live, work, visit and play for all members of our community. Representatives from the Hay Group have already met with each of you to share information on steps involved with the survey and solicit feedback from each of you. The Hay Group has also already conducted several focus groups with residents in the South, Middle and North areas of the City as well as separate focus groups with representatives from the Miami Beach business community and representatives from Miami Beach-based civic organizations. Based on the discussions held at these various focus groups, the Hay Group is now developing the survey questions and will provide the City an opportunity to review the questions before the survey is finalized. The target date to begin the telephone survey with residents is January 5, 2005.

**Art Basel / Miami Beach** – Staff from throughout the City continued to work to allocate resources for Art Basel / Miami Beach, which took place from December 1 through December 5. The exhibiting galleries, world press, and international visitors gave Art Basel / Miami Beach the highest marks ever, describing it as a successful, exciting event. 190 galleries from throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa actively participated, with a record number of 33,000 visitors and over 800 media representatives from throughout the world.

**Leadership Florida** - I attended the second session of Leadership Florida in Sarasota from December 2-4 which focused on bringing together public and private sector leaders from throughout the state of Florida to continue building a network throughout the state to deal with issues of mutual concern that affect the public and private sectors.

**Film & Print** – Several productions recently took place throughout Miami Beach, including a Travelocity commercial taped at the Burleigh House; a live webcast of the rock group Velvet Revolver (featuring ex Guns-n-Roses members) at Mansion nightclub; "The Other Side" an independent feature filmed at Crobar and throughout Lincoln Road. Upcoming productions include: ABC television network's "The Bachelor" reality show which is currently scouting for January – February 2005 taping; Dreamworks' "Red Eye," directed by Wes Craven, which will film a pivotal scene at the Continuum in late January 2005; the independent feature "Retirement" starring Jack Warden, Ossie Davis, George Segal and Rip Torn which will film throughout the City in February 2005; Fox television network's "Big Momma's House 2" starring Martin Lawrence which will film in January – February 2005 and Universal's "Miami Vice" movie, directed by Michael Mann and starring Jamie Foxx and Colin Ferrell, which begins filming throughout the City in April 2005.

**Public Safety** - In our ongoing efforts to enhance community policing, the Miami Beach Police Department has enhanced its level of service to the South Pointe Redevelopment District by opening a satellite office and assigning 12 officers to the area. The new office is located at 200 2nd Street. The initiative is placing emphasis on maintaining a highly visible police presence and addressing the quality of life issues within the neighborhood in cooperation with the residents, businesses and other City departments. Representatives from the Police Department command staff representative attended a TASER demonstration at the Miami Dade Police Department's Training Bureau along with representatives of the County's Community Relations Board, other police departments from throughout the County, representatives from the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office and the Medical Examiner's Office with the purpose of continuing discussion regarding the appropriate use of TASERs. Representatives from the Police Department also attended the Venetian Islands Homeowners Association and the Mid Beach Homeowners Association meetings to discuss ongoing public safety issues in these areas.

**Labor Unions** - On December 9, after 13 bargaining sessions, negotiators for the City and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) successfully concluded negotiations for a three year collective bargaining agreement. The AFSCME bargaining unit represents 292 employees in 39 classifications in several Departments throughout the City. The new contract represents the combined interest of both the City and Union; and includes a retroactive COLA of 3% for year 1, 3% for year 2, and 3.5% for year 3; allows all employees in AFSCME to participate in all City offered Health plans; offers new language for Labor-Management meetings; along with many other additions and changes. As discussed at the December 8 City Commission meeting, the Union and City bargaining teams are pleased with the outcome of the new agreement.

**Organizational Development** - As part of my ongoing efforts to meet with staff from all levels throughout all City Departments, I held brown bag lunch meetings with staff from the Planning Department and the Fleet Management Division. A workshop on ethics took place on December 1 for all management team members. This workshop was co-presented by Robert Meyers, Executive Director of the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust. In addition, an employee ad-hoc committee is currently working on updating the City's customer service standards in an effort to continuously improve the delivery of customer service to our residents, members of the business community and visitors.

**Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)** - On December 6, CIP staff and consultants held a Community Design Review Meeting (CDRM) with residents of the Venetian Islands. The 60% complete construction drawings for the right of way project were presented and residents were given the opportunity to review detailed plans, street-by-street on each island. Residents seemed pleased with design plans and eager to move into the construction phase. Miami-Dade County formally took possession of the Regional Library and are beginning finalize their move before the library opens in 2005. The Lummus Park Project will terminate and de-mobilize next week as promised to the Ocean Drive Association, and will re-start in the spring to complete the remaining work.

**Parking** – On December 8, the City began transitioning to multi-space meter stations in the areas and lots around Lincoln Road in an effort to enhance customer service levels by providing customers with more payment options. The Parking Department has been working closely with Lincoln Road merchants to ensure a smooth transition from single space meters to the master meters in the Lincoln Road area. The new system will be implemented one lot at a time beginning with the lot located on Lincoln Lane North between Meridian and Jefferson avenues. On-site personnel will assist customers with the new system. The new implementation will gradually move westward along the northern lots, then eastward on the southern lots. Additional details are outlined in the December 6 LTC sent to you regarding this matter.

**Employee Celebrations** – An employee led committee comprised of employees from throughout the City are working on this year's annual citywide holiday party which is scheduled to take place on Saturday, December 18 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Scott Rakow Youth Center. You should have received your invitation already and I hope you and your families are able to join us in celebrating the holidays at this citywide employee celebration.

**United Way Campaign** - The City's 2004 United Way campaign continues raising funds to benefit United Way-sponsored charities, many of which are situated within the City of Miami Beach. The campaign will run through the end of the year.

**Colony Theater** – Staff and I met on December 10 to discuss the ongoing construction issues related to the Colony Theater and work on a plan to finalize details relating to this project.

**Jackie Gleason Theater of Performing Arts** – On December 10, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to unveil the \$4.1 million renovations of the Jackie Gleason Theater of Performing Arts lobby areas, which encompasses restrooms, bar areas, lighting systems and more. These renovations will make the facility very competitive for many years to come, allowing patrons and presenters to enjoy our high tech amenities in a great environment.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Electronic Copy: Management Team

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